

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A monitoring system capable of identifying special event
2 content within a plurality of broadcast content streams, each of
3 said plurality of broadcast content streams having detectable
4 content attributes, said monitoring system operable to (i) sense a
5 content change within at least one of said plurality of broadcast
6 content streams as a function of said detectable content
7 attributes, (ii) detect said special event content broadcast within
8 said at least one of said plurality of broadcast content streams as
9 a function of said sensed content change, and (iii) selectively
10 generate a notification signal as a function of said detected
11 special event content and a subscriber profile.

1 2. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 1 wherein said subscriber profile is stored in
4 memory and comprises at least one record that maintains at least
5 one measurable characteristic of an associated subscriber.

1 3. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 2 wherein said stored subscriber profile is
4 initially set as a default profile.

1 4. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 2 wherein said monitoring system is further
4 operable to update said stored subscriber profile.

1 5. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 2 wherein said subscriber profile provides a
4 mathematical representation of a notification preference of an
5 associated subscriber.

1 6. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 5 wherein said subscriber profile is
4 automatically generated by said monitoring system at definition and
5 includes a default notification preference that is modifiable by
6 said associated subscriber.

1 7. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 5 wherein said monitoring system, as a function
4 of said mathematical representation of said notification
5 preference, generates said notification signal to selectively
6 direct at least one of a plurality of communication units to
7 communicate a message to said associated subscriber.

8 8. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
9 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
10 set forth in Claim 1 further comprising a content monitoring
11 controller that is operable to (i) receive said plurality of
12 broadcast content streams from at least one receiver, (ii) monitor
13 said plurality of received broadcast content streams, and
14 (iii) sense content changes in said plurality of received broadcast
15 content streams as a function of said detectable content
16 attributes.

1 9. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 1 further comprising a special event detecting
4 controller that identifies special event content as a function of
5 said sensed content change, said content detecting controller
6 operable to direct at least one of a plurality of communication
7 units to communicate a message to an associated subscriber as a
8 function of said notification signal.

1 10. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 9 wherein said special event detecting
4 controller is further operable to identify said sensed content
5 change as one of scheduled broadcast content and unscheduled
6 broadcast content that preempts scheduled broadcast content.

1 11. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 1 wherein said monitoring system is further
4 operable to monitor at least one of audio content, video content
5 and textual content within said plurality of broadcast content
6 streams.

1 12. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 11 wherein said monitoring system detects said
4 special event content broadcast within said at least one of said
5 plurality of broadcast content streams as a function of said at
6 least one of audio content, video content and textual content.

1 13. The monitoring system capable of identifying special
2 event content within a plurality of broadcast content streams as
3 set forth in Claim 11 wherein ones of said detectable content
4 attributes include a transcript of said at least one of audio
5 content, video content and textual content, and monitoring system
6 detects said special event content broadcast within said at least
7 one of said plurality of broadcast content streams as a function of
8 said transcript.

1 14. A method of operating a monitoring system that is capable
2 of identifying special event content within a plurality of
3 broadcast content streams, each of said plurality of broadcast
4 content streams having detectable content attributes, said method
5 of operation comprising the steps of:

6 sensing a content change within at least one of said
7 plurality of broadcast content streams as a function of said
8 detectable content attributes;

9 detecting said special event content broadcast within
10 said at least one of said plurality of broadcast content streams as
11 a function of said sensed content change; and

12 selectively generating a notification signal as a
13 function of said detected special event content and a subscriber
14 profile.

1 15. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 14 wherein said subscriber profile is stored in
3 memory and comprises at least one record that maintains at least
4 one measurable characteristic of an associated subscriber.

1 16. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 15 wherein said stored subscriber profile is
3 initially set as a default profile.

1 17. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in 15 wherein said monitoring system is further operable to
3 update said stored subscriber profile.

1 18. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 15 wherein said subscriber profile provides a
3 mathematical representation of a notification preference of an
4 associated subscriber.

1 19. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 18 wherein said subscriber profile is automatically
3 generated by said monitoring system at definition and includes a
4 default notification preference that is modifiable by said
5 associated subscriber.

1 20. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 18 further comprising the step of generating, as a
3 function of said mathematical representation, said notification
4 signal to selectively direct at least one of a plurality of
5 communication units to communicate a message to said associated
6 subscriber.

1 21. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

3 receiving said plurality of broadcast content streams
4 from at least one receiver; and

5 monitoring said plurality of received broadcast content
6 streams.

1 22. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 14 further comprising the step of directing at least
3 one of a plurality of communication units to communicate a message
4 to an associated subscriber as a function of said notification
5 signal.

1 23. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 21 further comprising the step of identifying said
3 sensed content change as one of scheduled broadcast content and
4 unscheduled broadcast content that preempts scheduled broadcast
5 content.

1 24. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 14 further comprising the step of monitoring at
3 least one of audio content, video content and textual content
4 within said plurality of broadcast content streams.

1 25. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 24 wherein said step of detecting said special event
3 content broadcast within said at least one of said plurality of
4 broadcast content streams is as a function of said at least one of
5 audio content, video content and textual content.

1 26. The method of operating the monitoring system as set
2 forth in Claim 24 wherein ones of said detectable content
3 attributes include a transcript of said at least one of audio
4 content, video content and textual content, and said step of
5 detecting said special event content broadcast within said at least
6 one of said plurality of broadcast content streams is as a function
7 of said transcript.

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1 27. An appliance comprising:

2 a receiver capable of receiving broadcast content
3 streams; and

4 a monitoring system capable of identifying special event
5 content within said received broadcast content streams, each of
6 said received broadcast content streams having detectable content
7 attributes, said monitoring system operable to (i) sense a content
8 change within at least one of said received broadcast content
9 streams as a function of said detectable content attributes,
10 (ii) detect said special event content broadcast within said at
11 least one of said received broadcast content streams as a function
12 of said sensed content change, and (iii) selectively generate a
13 notification signal as a function of said detected special event
14 content and a subscriber profile.

1 28. The appliance as set forth in Claim 27 wherein said
2 subscriber profile is stored in memory and comprises at least one
3 record that maintains at least one measurable characteristic of an
4 associated subscriber.

1 29. The appliance as set forth in Claim 28 wherein said
2 stored subscriber profile is initially set as a default profile.

1 30. The appliance as set forth in Claim 28 wherein said
2 monitoring system is further operable to update said stored
3 subscriber profile.

1 31. The appliance as set forth in Claim 28 wherein said
2 subscriber profile provides a mathematical representation of a
3 notification preference of an associated subscriber.

1 32. The appliance as set forth in Claim 31 wherein said
2 subscriber profile is automatically generated by said monitoring
3 system at definition and includes a default notification preference
4 that is modifiable by said associated subscriber.

1 33. The appliance as set forth in Claim 32 wherein said
2 monitoring system, as a function of said mathematical
3 representation of said notification preference, generates said
4 notification signal to selectively direct at least one of a
5 plurality of communication units to communicate a message to said
6 associated subscriber.

1 34. The appliance as set forth in Claim 27 wherein said
2 monitoring system is further operable to identify said sensed
3 content change as one of scheduled broadcast content and
4 unscheduled broadcast content that preempts scheduled broadcast
5 content.

1 35. The appliance set forth in Claim 27 wherein said
2 subscriber profile is actively associated therewith.

1 36. The appliance set forth in Claim 27 wherein said
2 subscriber profile is passively associated therewith.

1 37. The appliance set forth in Claim 27 wherein said
2 monitoring system is further operable to monitor at least one of
3 audio content, video content and textual content within said
4 plurality of broadcast content streams.

1 38. The appliance set forth in Claim 37 wherein said
2 monitoring system detects said special event content broadcast
3 within said at least one of said plurality of broadcast content
4 streams as a function of said at least one of audio content, video
5 content and textual content.

1 39. The appliance set forth in Claim 37 wherein ones of said
2 detectable content attributes include a transcript of said at least
3 one of audio content, video content and textual content, and
4 monitoring system detects said special event content broadcast
5 within said at least one of said plurality of broadcast content
6 streams as a function of said transcript.

1 40. A notification signal selectively generated as a function
2 of detected special event content and a subscriber profile, said
3 notification signal selectively generated by the steps of:

4 monitoring a plurality of broadcast content streams, each
5 of said plurality of broadcast content streams having detectable
6 content attributes;

7 sensing a content change within at least one of said
8 plurality of broadcast content streams as a function of said
9 detectable content attributes; and

10 detecting special event content broadcast within said at
11 least one of said plurality of broadcast content streams as a
12 function of said sensed content change.

1 41. The selectively generated notification signal as set
2 forth in Claim 40 wherein said signal directs operation of an
3 appliance.

1 42. The selectively generated notification signal as set
2 forth in Claim 41 wherein said associated appliance is capable of
3 operating in one of an active mode and a standby mode and, when
4 said appliance is operating in said standby mode, said signal
5 directs said associated appliance to switch from said standby mode
6 to said active mode.